

LATIMER PACKING HOUSE
(San Antonio Orchard Co. Fertilizer Packing House)
321 S. San Antonio Ave.
Ontario
San Bernardino County
California

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
LATIMER PACKING HOUSE (San Antonio Orchard Co. Fertilizer Packing House)

HABS NO. CA-2607

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Location: 321 S. SAN ANTONIO AVE.
East side of S. San Antonio Ave. between Holt Blvd. & State St.
Between S.P.R.R. & U.P.R.R.
City of Ontario
County of San Bernardino
California
Parcel No. 1049-013-02

U.S.G.S.
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates
11 439150 3768860

Present Owner: O.H. Kruse Grain & Milling
310 S. San Antonio Ave.
Ontario, CA 91762

Present Occupant: Vacant

Present Use: None. Intended for demolition

**Statement of
Significance:**

This building is one of two packing houses on the property that was the site of The San Antonio Orchard Company. It sits to the east of the main packing house structure at 321 South San Antonio Ave. and has played a part in Ontario agriculture since the turn-of-the-century. It was originally located across the street and owned by the same company. It and the main packing house now belong to O.H. Kruse Grain & Milling and has been vacant for four years. The structure is a good example of an early 20th century Vernacular Southern California Agricultural architecture.

Annually shipping 700 railroad cars of fruit, San Antonio Orchard company was one of the largest independent packing concerns in the entire California citrus belt. After its establishment by Charles Latimer in 1912, and the purchase of this property from the Los Angeles & Salt Lake Railroad, the company built up a good reputation for dependability and the high quality of fruit handled. This building played an important role in the San Antonio Orchard Company. When first built in 1911 it was used for packing citrus and potatoes. After it was moved from across San Antonio Avenue in 1924, the building became the headquarters of the Ontario Fertilizer Works, founded by the Latimers, a corporation that used this building to store and sell fertilizer to many of

the citrus ranchers in Ontario.

San Antonio Orchard company packed fruit from 1,700 acres, chiefly owned by the local company in Ontario and acreage in the Arlington-Riverside area. The concern employed an average of 190 persons.

The plant was equipped with the newest and most approved machinery known to the citrus industry at that time. A feature of special interest was a sterilization plant, through which field boxes used for hauling fruit to the packing houses were passed before they were returned to the orchards. Also included in the equipment was an automatic box-making machine.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

- 1. Date of erection:**
About 1911 - 1924 moved to site from 310 S. San Antonio Ave.
- 2. Architect / Builder**
Unknown
- 3. Original and subsequent owners:**
Los Angeles & Salt Lake Railroad 1911
San Antonio Orchard Co. 1912
O.H. Kruse Grain & Milling April 1, 1980
- 4. Builder, contractor, suppliers**
Unknown
- 5. Original plans and construction:**
Not available The building probably appears today as it did originally. The separate wings may have been built at different times but close to the date of construction.
- 6. Alterations and additions:**
The building was moved to this site in 1924 from its original site across the street at 310 S. San Antonio Ave. The separate wings may have been built at different times but close to the date of construction. There are no later alterations except that the whole building has been allowed to deteriorate. All windows are missing and the foundation is collapsed at points.

B. Historical Context

Until World War II, citrus growing was the dominant industry and interest in the west end of San Bernardino County the San Gabriel Valley. As late as 1945, the packing of citrus in these areas returned 50 million dollars annually and provided employment and investment opportunity for virtually the entire population of the area from Cucamonga to the San Gabriel River. In 1956 it returned about \$ 15 million, and became progressively lower each succeeding year as more urban housing developments appeared.

The citrus industry of San Bernardino county dates from 1857 when Anson van Leuven brought some seeding trees from San Gabriel Mission and set them out on his ranch near old San Bernardino. These trees apparently thrived, for in 1862, he set out four acres. This was the first commercial citrus planting in the county.

In 1865 L.B. van Leuven set out 50 three-year-old seedlings and in 1873 added 100 more to his orchard. In 1869 L.F. Cram planted one-and-three-quarters acres of seedlings on his East Highland property and 1870 saw the first planting in the Craft's orchard at Crafton. Col. Tolles planted the seed for his Lugonia (Redlands) orchard in 1874. These plantings are recognized as the foundation of the citrus industry in San Bernardino County.

Between 1870 and 1880, the citrus acreage continued to increase. Seedlings continued to predominate, although there were many budded trees planted such as Mediterranean Sweets, Malta Bloods, Valencias, and St. Michaels; also a few lemon and limes. Toward the end of this decade, the navel orange was finding its way into some of the plantings.

The Washington Navel Orange was California's best known and most loved crop. The United States Department of Agriculture sent two small budded trees, the buds of which were taken from trees introduced from Bahia, Brazil, to Mrs. Luther C. Tibbets to try out in California. These were planted on the Tibbets property at Riverside, San Bernardino County in 1873. From these two trees has developed the greatest fruit industry in the state of California and the best oranges grown in the world.

During the early days the fruit was bought on the trees for a lump sum but, fortunately, as the crop increased, the method of buying was changed.

The early 1890s were dark days in the citrus industry, the grower not knowing whether he would receive a little money, no money, or red ink for his crop. This condition was perhaps a blessing in disguise, for it forced the grower into doing something for his very existence. Out of this need sprang the co-operative marketing groups which even today are proving to be of great benefit to the industry.

San Antonio Fruit Exchange was one of the seven original district exchange that formed Sunkist Growers when the co-operative was organized in 1893. P.J. Dreher, prominent in the Claremont area, was one of the leading figures in the industry at the time. Dreher was a member of the Sunkist board of directors for 24 years, vice-president for 12 years, and president for a short time prior to his retirement. San Antonio Fruit Exchange hit its peak season in 1941-42 when more than two million boxes of all varieties were handled at that exchange.

On October 14, 1893, 15 growers from Ontario and four from Cucamonga met and formed the nucleus of the present Ontario-Cucamonga Fruit Exchange, which affiliated with Sunkist five years later. C.E. Harwood was elected president of that group. Not all citrus ranchers were part of the Exchange network, however. Some remained independent. William Latimer stated that his family have always sold and marketed their

fruit independently. Depending on the yearly yield, sometimes the cooperatives would purchase from the independents.

B.A. Woodford, who later became general manager of California Fruit Growers Exchange -now Sunkist Growers- was named first secretary-manager of the local growers' organization. This group had 10,000 boxes of lemons to market in its first year. Once the movement started, it grew steadily until Sunkist became the largest co-operative food marketing organization in the world. It is still the largest handler of citrus fruits and products.

Credit for establishing the first citrus packing house in the Ontario-Upland community, now the home of scores of such institutions, is accorded to N.L. Mitchell. With G.T. Butterfield, with whom he was associated in the grocery business in the old A.O.U.W. building at the south-east corner of Euclid Ave. and Main St. Mitchell established the first packing house at Main St. and Lemon Avenue. in 1891.

The two-story brick building which housed the packing plant had originally been used as a livery stable, and in a remodeled form became the General Electric (Hotpoint) company. The first fruit packed there, Mitchell related back in 1932, was a load of oranges delivered by H.C. Oakley. The oranges sold for \$ 2 a box, and his firm paid \$ 30 a month rental for the former livery barn. The wonderful climate, many say, made it possible for San Bernardino County to produce the best oranges grown.

The Latimer family played a major role in the Ontario citrus industry. This Latimer packing house was built in 1911 by the Los Angeles & Salt Lake Railroad (Union Pacific) and purchased in about 1912 for the San Antonio Orchard Company. The building was owned by the Latimer family until the late 1980s and is now a part of the retail headquarters of O.H. Kruse Grain & Milling.

Four generations of the Latimer family have been influential in the San Bernardino / Riverside area. Hugh Latimer and his wife moved to Riverside from Canada in 1900. They owned land and citrus groves in Riverside and Ontario. In the early days, 1900-1940, the Latimers would buy raw land and begin growing citrus and then sell the "start-up" groves to other ranchers.

Charles Latimer, born in 1887 in Ottawa, Canada, moved to Riverside with his parents at age 3. He left Riverside in 1907 when he moved to Ontario to manage family groves. He later married Winifred Smith, a native Ontarian, and the daughter of W.W. Smith, an Ontario pioneer.

The San Antonio Orchard Company in Ontario was later owned and operated by Charles Latimer. Latimer was one of many citrus producers and agriculturalists who came to Ontario soon after the turn-of-the-century.

In addition to his large citrus holdings, Charles Latimer had extensive vineyard interests and for a number of years, the San Antonio Orchard company handled carloads of juice grapes and potatoes as well as its large orange shipments.

William Latimer succeeded his father as owner of the San Antonio Orchard Company and his son-in-law continues today working in the business.

Four generations of the family have also been active in public service and civic affairs in Ontario. W.W. Smith, Winifred Latimer's father served as mayor from 1902 until 1906 and as city treasurer from 1920 to 1924. Charles Latimer founded Latimer Field, the first Ontario Airport, in 1926. Charles Latimer's son Charles (Chuck) continued in his father's footsteps and lived to see Ontario International Airport become a reality. He also served on the City Council from 1958 until 1962 and was Ontario's first directly

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elected mayor from 1962 to 1964. Maggie Latimer-Starratt continues the family public service legacy by her involvement in community issues and by chairing the Ontario Historic Preservation Commission and the Board of the Ontario Museum of History and Art.

Prepared by: Judy Wright
Title: Principal
Affiliation: AEGIS, Planning for Historic Preservation
Date: September, 1994 .

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character:

The size, scale, and design, and building materials of this packing house structure combine to serve as an illustration of the commercial / agricultural buildings that served Ontario and the surrounding agricultural industries in the late 19 th and early 20 th centuries. Its site by the tracks emphasizes the relationship of that agricultural industry with the railroads. Especially in combination with the larger packing-house structure on the same site, this building is an illustration of a major part of Ontario's history. The larger packing house is currently being used by O.H. Kruse Grain & Milling.

2. Condition of fabric:

The whole building has been allowed to deteriorate and the foundation has collapsed at some points. Most of the timbers and siding appear to be in good condition. There is no glass in the windows. The current owners have no plans for restoration as the building is not situated or designed to meet current needs.

B. Description of the Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: 187' x 98'

Main Section plan
89' 6" x 61' 6"

approx. height
floor to eave 12' 6" - to ridge 23'

East Wing plan
85' x 24'

approx. height
floor to eave 11' - to ridge 16'

North Wing plan
24' x 36' 6"

approx. height
floor to eave 14' - to ridge 18' 6"

Office 12' 8" x 31'

2. Foundations:
Raised wood foundation (3-4 ft.) on concrete footings. The crawl space is faced with vertical boards except for the east wing which is faced with spaced horizontal boards.
3. Walls:
Exterior - Each section has horizontal wood siding slightly different from the others. The main section is clad with 4.5" weather board; the north wing with 7.75 "; and the east wing with 7 ". The dormer has clapboard siding.
Interior - Exposed framing
4. Structural system, framing:
Main Section Post and beam - 24 posts supporting east-west beams and north-south bracing.
2 X 6 wall studs 16 " on center
Other sections Balloon framing.
2 X 4 wall studs 16" on center
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: None

6. Openings

a. Doorways and doors:

Main Section

- West wall - rolling loading door faced with vertical siding and mounted on interior track in wall to right of shed wing, opens to train dock
- East wall - none
- North wall - rolling loading door faced with vertical siding and mounted on interior track in wall to right of north wing, opens at truck level
- South wall - 2 rolling loading doors faced with vertical siding and mounted on interior track, open to train dock

North Wing

- North wall - rolling loading door faced with vertical siding and mounted on interior track, opens at truck level
- East wall - small pedestrian door - no stoop
- West wall - 2 rolling loading doors faced with vertical siding and mounted on interior tracks, open at truck level

East Wing

- North wall - 2 rolling loading doors faced with vertical siding and mounted on exterior tracks, open at truck level
- East wall - none
- South wall - 2 rolling loading doors faced with vertical siding, open to train dock

Office

- West wall - pedestrian door at south end

b. Windows and shutters:

Main Section

- West wall - large window in gable end with flatboard trim-no sash
- small window at north end
- East wall - large window in gable end with flatboard trim-no sash
- 6 screened vents
- North wall - 3 screened vents in wall to left of north wing
- 3 windows with flatboard trim in wall to right of north wing
- South wall - none

North Wing

North wall - none
East wall - none
West wall - none

East Wing

North wall - screened clearstory under eaves
East wall - none
South wall - none

Office

West wall -2 pairs of windows with flatboard trim - no sashes

7. **Roof**

Main Section

- a. Shape, covering: east/west gable with unequal slope created by 9' extension at north eave - composition shingle
- b. Cornice, eaves: approx. 2 ft. overhang- exposed rafters
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: Large shed-roof dormer centered on ridge with one, south-facing window opening. Clad with clapboard and roofed with composition shingles

North Wing

- a. Shape, covering: north/south gable - composition shingle
- b. Cornice, eaves: approx. 1 ft. overhang- 20 exposed rafters
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: none

East Wing

- a. Shape, covering: east/west gable - composition shingle
- b. Cornice, eaves: approx. 1 ft. overhang- 43 exposed rafters
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: none

Office

- a. Shape, covering: shed - composition shingle
- b. Cornice, eaves: exposed rafters

c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: none

C. Description of Interior

Main Section

This large open space is broken only by 18 posts, which support three heavy east-west beams and and bracing. The interior is illuminated by the window in the roof dormer. The main north wall is an interior wall because of the extension across the north side. This wall has large openings into the north wing and smaller openings into the extension portion to the west of the north wing. All of the walls and the ceiling have open timbers. The timber flooring has been covered with an asphalt coating.

North Wing

This is a large open space. All of the walls and the ceiling have open timbers. The timber flooring has been covered with an asphalt coating.

East Wing

This is a large open space. All of the walls and the ceiling have exposed framing. The 2 X 4 wall studs are 16 " on center. There is a joist with knee bracing at every other rafter. The timber flooring has been covered with an asphalt coating.

Office

The wood floors are partially covered with linoleum squares and the walls of lath-and-plaster are damaged.

D. Site

General setting and orientation:

This building occupies the eastern end of a large site that straddles S. San Antonio Ave. between the Southern Pacific R.R. on the north and the Union Pacific R.R. on the south. On the west side of S. San Antonio Ave. is the main office and grain & milling structures. On the east side is a large packing house at road edge, a large service yard, and the structure of this report. The structures are all oriented to make use of the railroad tracks as well as truck delivery and pick-up.

Prepared by: Mary Stoddard
Title: Principal
Affiliation: AEGIS, Planning for Historic Preservation
Date: September, 1994

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

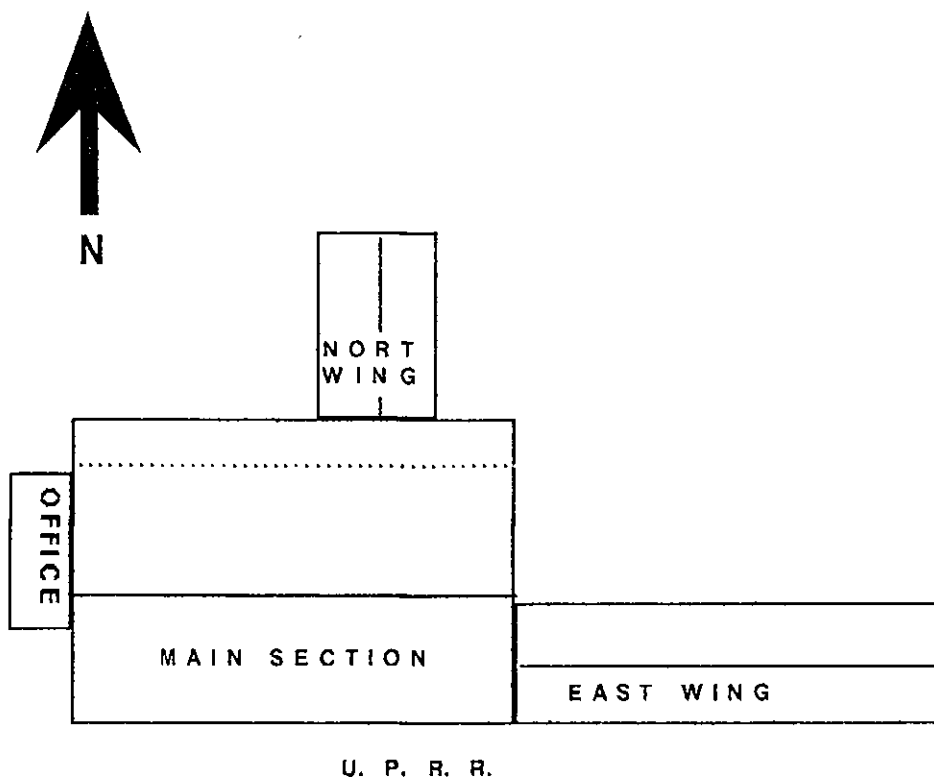
- A. Original Architectural Drawing - none
- B. Early Views: none
- C. Interviews: Interview with William Latimer, December, 1994.
- D. Bibliography:
 - 1. Primary and unpublished sources
 - Ontario Historic Resources Survey
 - Model Colony Room Files "Packing Industry"
"Citrus Exchanges"
 - Interview with William Latimer, December, 1994.
 - 2. Secondary and published sources
 - Alexander, J.A., George Chaffey, Macmillan & Co. Ltd., London, 1924.
 - Conley, Bernice Bedford, Dreamers and Dwellers Ontario and Neighbors,
Privately published, 1982
 - Daily Report, May 31, 1940.
 - History of Ontario, Ontario Montclair School District, 1958.
 - "Pages from the Past", Bernice Conley columns from the Daily Report,
1979 - 1982.
 - Ontario from A to Z. Local History Scrapbook. Ontario Public Library,
Model Colony Room.
- E. Likely sources not yet investigated none

PART IV PROJECT INFORMATION

This project is a donated recording project. Included agencies are: O.H. Kruse Grain & Milling, and the preservation planning firm, AEGIS as consultants. The records were prepared between August 16, 1994 and October 5, 1994. The building is scheduled for demolition.

BUILDING FOOTPRINT

||||| S. P. R. R. |||||



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CONTEXT SITE PLAN

